CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE Jordan
ST D-378

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

REVIEWED BY VWOLF JR. DATE 5/25/82
May 15, 1953
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE 10:30 a.m.
TS AUTH. _____ REASON(S) _____
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☒ RELEASABLE☒
RELEASE DENIED☐
FA or FOI EXEMPTIONS _____

(14)

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SUBJECT: Jordan

PLACE: Office of the Minister of Education, Amman

PARTICIPANTS: United States
Mr. Douglas MacArthur
Mr. Henry A. Byroade
Mr. Andrew G. Lynch

Jordan
H.E. Ahmad Tuqan, Minister of Education

After the usual exchange of courtesies Mr. Byroade opened the discussion by telling Mr. Tuqan that he had heard a great deal about him and was fully aware of the respected position Mr. Tuqan held in Jordan; that he was delighted to find that Mr. Tuqan was a member of the new Cabinet and that he was anxious to hear Mr. Tuqan's views on the situation existing between Jordan and Israel. He regretted that the extreme shortness of time left to him and Mr. MacArthur made it necessary for his interview to be only a brief one.

Mr. Tuqan assured Mr. Byroade that he would waste no time. He told Mr. Byroade that he, Tuqan, had been for a period of about eight months senior Jordanian representative on the Mixed Armistice Commission. He had had trouble, he said, not only with the Israelis but with his own people. Mr. Byroade assured him that he was aware of this fact. Mr. Tuqan said he feared that the basic trouble arose insofar as MAC was concerned from the Israeli insistence upon the letter of the law being maintained without regard for either common sense or justice. The Demarcation Line, he pointed out, had been drawn in a hasty and haphazard fashion. It was often found that villages were cut off from their lands or their wells or both. The village of Qalqilya was a case in point. The orange groves of the village extended some 80 yards inside Israel as the line was drawn. It would have meant no sacrifice to Israel to permit Qalqilya to keep its groves; although an Israeli railroad ran between the village and the groves every guarantee was given to the Israelis regarding the railroad. The Israelis, however, insisted upon sticking to the letter of the agreement and depriving the village of its means of livelihood. This was a type of insistence upon the letter of the border agreement which created great bitterness along the Israel-Jordan border.

The Minister then said that he felt a lack of good faith in the Israeli MAC. He also said, when Mr. Byroade suggested that the Local Commanders Agreements should be revived, that the Local Commanders Agreements were the best hope at the moment for producing comparative stability along the frontier. Mr. Byroade asked if a high level discussion between Israel and Jordan might not be the best step to take next. The Minister replied that the atmosphere at this time was too tense and that he felt no good purpose would be served by suggesting such a meeting at the moment. He was in favor of reinstituting the Local Commanders Agreements. He said, however, that there must be goodwill on both sides. The Israelis he felt had used the Local Commanders Agreements to obtain the enforcement of police measures in connection

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with the most minor incidents. The functions, he believed, of the Local Commanders Agreements were intended for more important matters. Carrying out of the Agreements had bogged down as a result of this approach in the minutia of such trivial affairs as the theft of a bicycle. If the Israeli and Jordanian Commanders both receive high level directives there might be hope of a reasonable approach to border infiltrations.

After a period of comparative calm, Mr. Tuqan said, it might be then possible to arrange with some hope of constructive developments the high level meeting Mr. Eyroade had mentioned. Mr. Tuqan emphasized that a great deal of the infiltration of which Israel complained so bitterly was of a comparatively innocuous sort and was to some extent inevitable in the circumstances.

He then stated that it was essential that the head of the Israeli MAC delegation be a cool-headed, well-balanced individual. It was suggested to the Minister that this was equally valid with regard to the head of the Jordan MAC delegation and that perhaps this had not always been the case in the past. The Minister replied that he feared this was true. He assured the American group that he had given his views on the border situation as frankly and as briefly as he could, knowing that they were pressed for time.